

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF)

New Grantee Program Start-up Checklist

This document provides a checklist of considerations and requirements involved in setting up your SSVF program. The checklist contains seven primary activities with multiple considerations within each activity.

Activity	Tasks
1. Hire/Designate Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop job descriptions and qualifications ✓ Hire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Program manager/supervisor ○ Key program direct service staff
2. Develop Program Policies, Procedures, and Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify required and optional policies, procedures and forms to develop based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ VA SSVF program guide requirements, SSVF Final Rule and NOFA ✓ SSVF proposal and final agreement with VA ✓ SSVF practice standards • Develop program policies and procedures consistent with VA requirements, program design, and SSVF best practices, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Targeting, eligibility and prioritization criteria ✓ Outreach and engagement ✓ Screening and program admission determination, including eligibility determination and applicant appeals process ✓ Coordination with area Continuum of Care groups including participation in coordinated assessment systems ✓ Participant assessment ✓ Housing plans and follow-up ✓ Case management and tenancy supports ✓ Tenancy supports for program participants, including such supports as landlord-tenant rights/responsibilities education, home visits, tenant skill-building, other elements of housing counseling ✓ Financial assistance planning and considerations, including types, amounts, duration, and limitations, including participant share of housing costs ✓ Financial assistance request, review and approval process for SSVF program and accounting staff ✓ Landlord recruitment, retention and supports, including such supports as communication, mediation, follow-up to landlords, any payments the program may offer for rental arrears, damage to the unit, move-out without notice, etc. ✓ Recordkeeping requirements ✓ Household 90 day recertification ✓ Rent Reasonableness ✓ Housing habitability inspections ✓ Participant rights and responsibilities ✓ Critical incidents ✓ Supervision delivery, training of staff, and staff reviews ✓ Service termination and case closing/exit procedures

- ✓ Participant grievance and appeals process
- ✓ Handling of confidential information
- ✓ Administering of TruthPoint Survey
- ✓ Handling of conflicts of interest/ethical code of conduct
- ✓ Internal monitoring policy and procedure to guide review of programmatic and fiscal operations

- **Develop homelessness prevention targeting threshold score for your program.**

Complete “SSVF Homelessness Prevention Screening Disposition Form” and submit to VA Regional Coordinator (if not already complete during grant award process).

- **Develop program forms** such as:

- **Grantee Designed Forms**

- ✓ Program Screening, Eligibility Assessment and Intake Determination
- ✓ Referral forms to make and receive referrals from other providers and/or your community’s coordinated assessment system
- ✓ Assessment of the participant’s housing situation, housing barriers and other information needed to obtain and/or retain housing.
- ✓ Housing Stability Plan/Individual Service Plan with goals, action steps, timelines, assigned responsibility (staff or participant) and review date(s)
- ✓ Client Budget worksheet(s) for expenses and income
- ✓ Participant Consent to Obtain and Release Information
- ✓ Grievance Procedure with space for participant and staff signatures
- ✓ Case notes (form or through HMIS or equivalent, depending on SSVF policies and procedures)
- ✓ Program Agreement (e.g. client and agency responsibilities, etc.)
- ✓ Financial Assistance Request Form (internal between program and fiscal staff)
- ✓ Participant Exit Form/Case closing criteria

- **Required SSVF Forms – Download Format from SSVF University**

- ✓ Homeless Prevention Screening Disposition Form
- ✓ Staff Certification of Eligibility for SSVF
- ✓ Critical Incident Report
- ✓ Participant Satisfaction Surveys (administered via TruthPoint)

- **Official SSVF Forms - Download Recommended Format from SSVF**

University (These forms are recommended for SSVF grantees to use to fulfill requirements. However, grantees may create a form of their own design to fit the same purpose.)

- ✓ Staff Recertification of Continued Assistance
- ✓ Pending Verification of Veteran Status
- ✓ Income Verification Template OR Self-declaration of Income Template
- ✓ Asset Income Calculation Worksheet

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Income Calculation Worksheet ✓ Homeless Certification Template or Self-declaration of Homelessness ✓ Self-declaration of Housing Status ✓ Documentation Checklist 1: Participant Eligibility ✓ Documentation Checklist 2: TFA and Housing Unit ✓ Recertification Checklist 3: Participant Continued Eligibility ✓ Rent Reasonableness Checklist ✓ Housing Habitability Standards – Strongly recommended for new (different) units
3. Train Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a plan for orientation and ongoing staff training including training logs to track training received. • Key staff training content areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ VA SSVF program guide and requirements ✓ SSVF program design, policies, procedures, and forms ✓ Referral partnerships and protocols ✓ SSVF best practice standards ✓ Customized best practice training using SSVF University resources ✓ Incorporate the experiences of formerly homeless households into training plan
4. Outreach and Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a written outreach plan for outreach and engagement with homeless and at-risk Veteran families. The plan should describe outreach strategies, frequency of activities, key partners, program staff roles, referral protocols, and plan for reviewing outreach. Highlight how the program will outreach to the target populations outlined in the grant agreement, including hard-to-reach Veterans. The plan should include outreach to all areas covered by your SSVF program and specifically discuss how SSVF is integrated into the community's coordinated assessment system for both Rapid Re-Housing and Homelessness Prevention: <p><u>Rapid Re-Housing</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CoC coordinated assessment provider(s), if one has been established for your community ✓ Homeless street outreach providers including (but not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Healthcare for the Homeless ○ PATH program(s) ○ VA outreach programs ○ Other mainstream street outreach providers ✓ Mainstream-funded emergency shelter programs for individuals and families ✓ VA-funded emergency shelter programs, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ VA Domiciliary Care for Homeless Veterans Program(s) ○ VA Healthcare for Homeless Veterans Projects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Contract Emergency Housing ▪ Community Contract Residential Treatment Programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mainstream-funded transitional housing programs for individuals and families ✓ VA-funded transitional housing projects, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grant and Per Diem Program(s) (GPD) ○ Compensated Work Therapy – Transitional Residences ✓ VA Community Resource and Referral Center(s) ✓ Veterans Service Organizations ✓ City, county and state law enforcement representatives ✓ Local/state/federal parks representatives ✓ Local welfare offices, food pantries, hot meal programs, and other programs offering basic needs to very low-income families and individuals ✓ Local hospitals, jails, treatment centers, and other institutions where people who are homeless may go (for less than 90 days or longer periods of time) ✓ 24/7 establishments frequented by people who are homeless, such as bus or train stations ✓ Other known locations where people who are homeless may go for assistance (such as places of worship or community centers) ✓ Other homelessness prevention and emergency assistance providers <p><u>Homelessness Prevention</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ CoC coordinated assessment provider(s) ✓ Community information and referral/2-1-1 service ✓ Emergency shelters (to enable diversion, when possible) ✓ Veterans Service Organizations ✓ VA Medical Center ✓ VA Community Resource and Referral Center(s) ✓ Legal services, courts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop program information materials, including program brochures, fact sheets, other handouts and, when possible, web based information and contacts. • Identify and contact key outreach and referral sources to establish referral arrangements, including each of the following below for persons who are homeless (RRH) or at-risk of homelessness (HP). • Develop an outreach log to adequately document all outreach efforts and results.
5. Service Referral and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key service referral and coordination partners and points of contact, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Other SSVF grantees serving the same and/or adjoining geography ✓ CoC and other CoC providers, including all homeless assistance and homeless prevention providers that may serve Veterans; VA and targeted Veterans programs; and other community service providers ✓ Other homeless service providers who do not otherwise engage in CoC or VA planning and coordination efforts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with other SSVF grantees to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program services, case coordination, and information sharing protocols ✓ Determine program coordination plan, including which Veterans each program will serve and when to triage Veterans to another SSVF provider or another CoC provider ✓ Share information on key community services, housing resources, and landlord partners ✓ Develop plan to reduce and eliminate duplication of services • Meet with CoC representative(s) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria and program service information ✓ Identify SSVF role in CoC coordinated assessment system and strategies/processes for linking Veterans who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to SSVF ✓ Identify strategies and processes for linking homeless or at-risk Veterans on street or in shelter to SSVF • Meet with local VA Medical Center, VA Community Resource and Referral Center(s), other programs targeting at-risk/homeless Veterans (e.g., GPD, VASH, HVRP, etc.), and local Veterans Service Organizations to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program services, case coordination, and information sharing protocols ✓ Determine screening and referral processes for each VA benefits and service, consider developing a standard referral form ✓ Determine referral protocol for Veterans who engage with VA first and need information on how to access SSVF. • Meet with other service providers, such as employment assistance, child care, healthcare, mental health, and substance abuse providers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program services, case coordination, and information sharing protocols ✓ Determine screening and referral processes ✓ Determine levels of referrals based on available community resources and SSVF demand • Obtain and/or develop a directory of services, key contacts, and referral protocols for staff reference
6. Housing Referral and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key public and private housing options, partners, and points of contact, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Private market landlords and landlord associations ✓ Privately owned subsidized housing ✓ Public Housing Authority(ies) ✓ HUD-VASH program representative(s) ✓ HUD Emergency Solutions Grant Program ✓ Other non-HUD-VASH permanent supportive housing (including HUD Continuum

	<p>of Care Program and other federal opportunities)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ State or local housing programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with other housing providers and landlords to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Share program eligibility/targeting criteria, program participant services and landlord supports, participant financial assistance, communication and mediation protocols ✓ Determine housing screening criteria, unit locations and sizes, general unit availability, rental and security deposit amounts, and willingness to accept third party financial assistance ✓ Determine screening and referral processes • Obtain and/or develop a directory of housing options, key contacts, and referral protocols for staff reference. This should include a mechanism for updating and communicating key housing contacts and available units
7. Subcontractors (if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and execute subcontractor agreements consistent with VA and grantee requirements, policies, and best practices, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Scope of work to be performed by subcontractor ✓ Roles of subcontractor and grantee ✓ How grantee will monitor and provide oversight to subcontractor ✓ Financial processes for reimbursement ✓ System or method for amending agreement ✓ Conflict of Interest and Liability • Establish subcontractor invoice and payment policies, procedures and forms, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Minimum supporting documentation subcontractors must submit to grantee along with invoices ✓ Invoice submission process, frequency and timelines, review, and payment /reimbursement schedule • Train subcontractor on program policies, procedures, forms, etc. required under the SSVF program • Establish a subcontractor monitoring plan, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Schedule for on-site review of each subcontractor ✓ List of program activities and records to be reviewed during monitoring and, if less than 100% of records will be monitored, the approach to selecting representative sample of financial and client records to be reviewed ✓ Approach to issuing monitoring findings/concerns and correcting findings ✓ Protocol for ensuring any funding/concerns are resolved within a specified timeframe